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Note on two Coins from Kausambhi.—By THE HONORABLE E. C. BAYLEY,
C. S. I., C. S.

The two coins which I lay before the Society, come from the site of the ancient city of Kausambhi, situate on the river Jamuná, near Alláhábád, a full description of which will be found in Genl. Cunningham's work on the Geography of Ancient India, Vol. I, pp. 391-98, as also in his Archæological Reports from 1862 to 1865, Vol. I, p. 301.

Bábu Sivaprasád, C. S. I., the Inspector of Schools for the Banáras Division, to whom General Cunningham acknowledges his obligations for information regarding this site, some time ago sent me several coins found upon it. I told him, that though evidently containing types of much interest, they were unfortunately too imperfect for identification, but that I had no doubt, more perfect coins would yield a valuable result.

Bábu Sivaprasád has now sent me the two present coins with a few others of less interest, one of the latter is of the type which Col. Stacy termed the "Cock and Bull" type, and bears the legend 'Deva mita (sa?).' This coin, however, is not from Kausambhi, but from Eastern Audh.

The first of the two coins which I am about to describe (Fig. i), is rather thin, weighing 37·035 grains, and is of a white metal which does not appear to be silver, but which I have not ventured to clean. The reverse bears a rude and faint representation of some animal, apparently the Indian bull. The obverse bears, in the field of the coin, the symbols of the sacred tree on the left; in the middle a curious semicircular disk, with a sort of handle and some marks within the semicircle, more like a spade or similar agricultural instrument than anything else to which I can compare it.

The symbol on the right appears to be identical with one often found on the early punched silver coins so common in India, and resembles the rod of Æsculapius, or rather perhaps two serpents entwined across a staff.



The legend, however, is the most remarkable part of the coin. It is quite legible, and I read it as महवरुण्ड, or “Maha Varuṇḍa,” the last letter being a compound (as I take it) of the cerebral $n = ण = ण$ and the cerebral $द = ड = द$. The last letter may, however, be possibly ण्ड, in which case the word would read “varuṇḍú.” In either case, the word would be “varuṇḍa,” Prakrit for Váruṇḍa, for which no other meaning is given in the dictionaries, but that of “king of the serpents,” of whom it was either the name or title. I am indebted to Rájá Kálikrishna for the etymology of the word, which he derives from the root वृ (वृणति), “to nourish or support,” or as in some lexicons, “to protect, to surround,”—a root from which is said also to be derived the word ‘varanda’ or ‘veranda’ in such common use among us.

The conclusions I would draw from the use of this term are as follows,—whether it was used as the name of the striker of the coin, as such names Balarám, Mahárám, Mahádeo, Sríkishn, are used in our own day, or as an invocation to the deity worshipped; in any case the use of the acknowledged name or title of the serpent king indicates the prevalence of snake worship at Kausambhi at a period which, from the character of the letters, I should be inclined to place at least one century before the Christian era, possibly much earlier.

The next coin (Fig. ii) is even yet more curious. It is of copper and thicker than one above. The weight is 60.444 grs. The reverse also apparently bears the figure of an animal, now undistinguishable; the obverse, however, is unusually clear and distinct, and from the form of the letters, I would give it a more recent date than the previous coin, but still place it not later than the first century of the Christian era.

The symbol to the left Bábu Pratápachandra Ghosh assures me is the true “svastika,” that which is ordinarily so called, and which is identical with the “fylfot” or Odin’s seal being properly termed Vajránkus’a.

The centre symbol is the sacred tree, and the third to the right a serpent. The legend runs plainly thus—